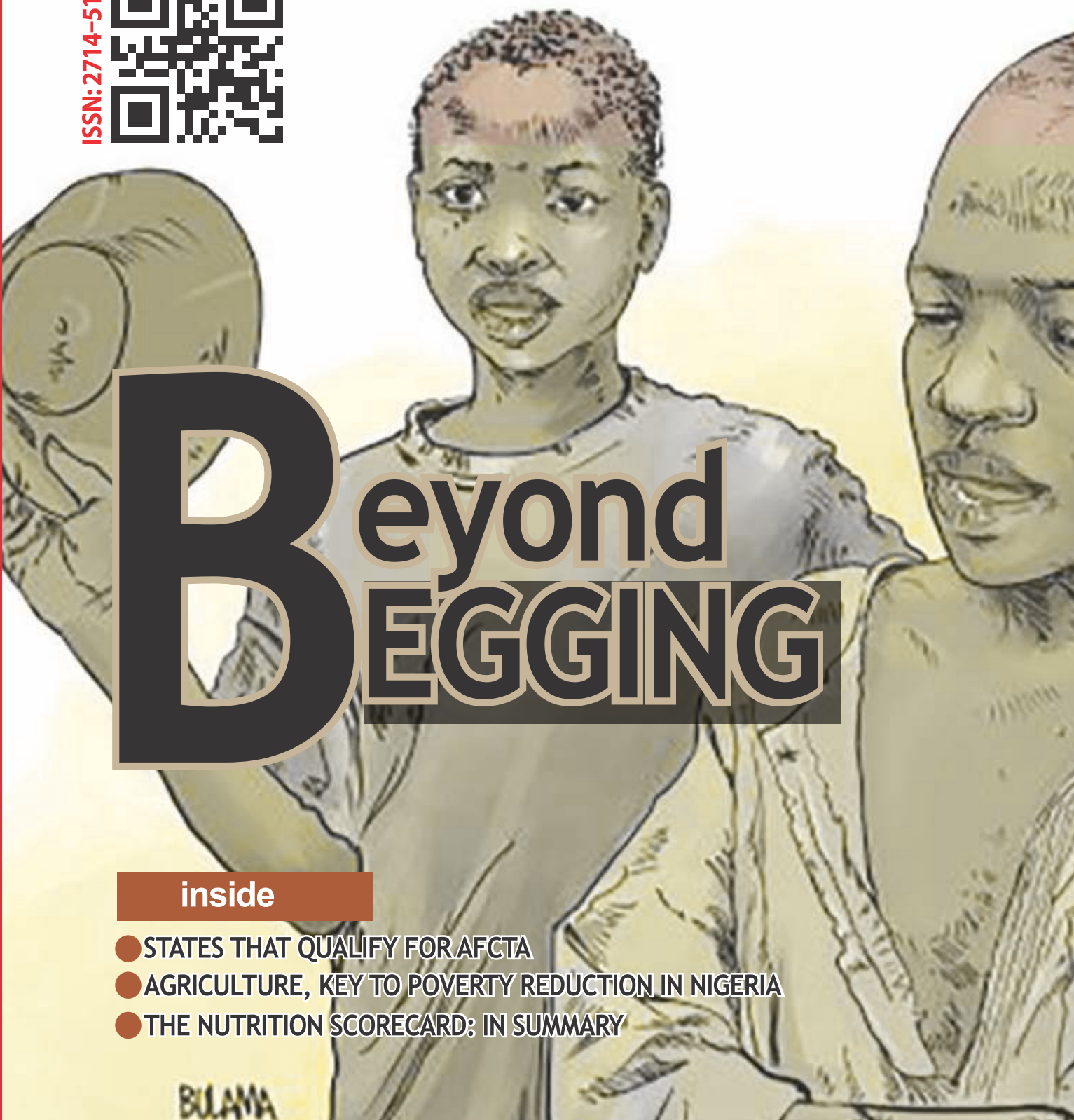
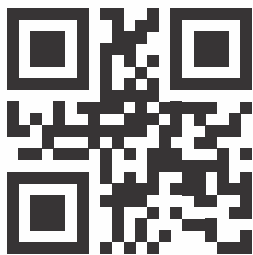




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Beyond BEGGING

inside

- STATES THAT QUALIFY FOR AFCTA
- AGRICULTURE, KEY TO POVERTY REDUCTION IN NIGERIA
- THE NUTRITION SCORECARD: IN SUMMARY

BULAMA



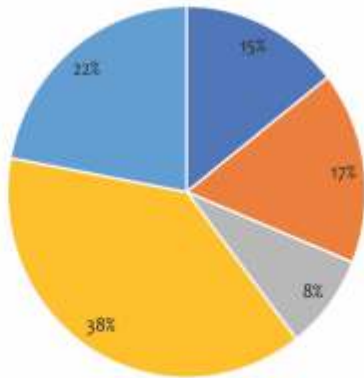
African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)

A short perspective for sub-national government

Stylized facts on Intra-Africa Merchandise Exports

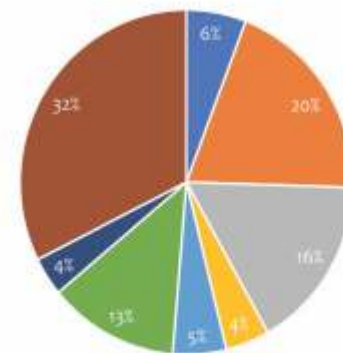
- The Countries of Southern Africa maintain the largest share (38% valued at US\$30 billion) of merchandise exports within Africa, compared to Western Africa (22% at US\$17 billion).
- At the level of regional economic communities, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) accounts for 32% of intra-Africa merchandise exports compared to 13% from ECOWAS.

Intra-Africa merchandise exports in 2018 (by region)



■ Northern Africa ■ Eastern Africa ■ Middle Africa ■ Southern Africa ■ Western Africa

Intra-Africa merchandise exports in 2018 (by regional economic community)



■ AMU ■ CEN-SAD ■ COMESA ■ EAC ■ ECCAS ■ ECOWAS ■ IGAD ■ SADC

States that stand to benefit from the AfCFTA are those with active participation in the global/Africa value chain

Key factors that will position States to benefit from the agreement:

- High industrial capacity
- High agricultural production
- High resource endowment, including renewable energy
- Stable policy environment, including a fair tax regime and reliable budgets/development plans
- High-level of transparency and public disclosure of information

Availability of infrastructure including energy, roads and rail.

Access to ports

Short to medium term measures to maximize the potentials of the AfCFTA

The success of governments will depend on many prompt decisions:

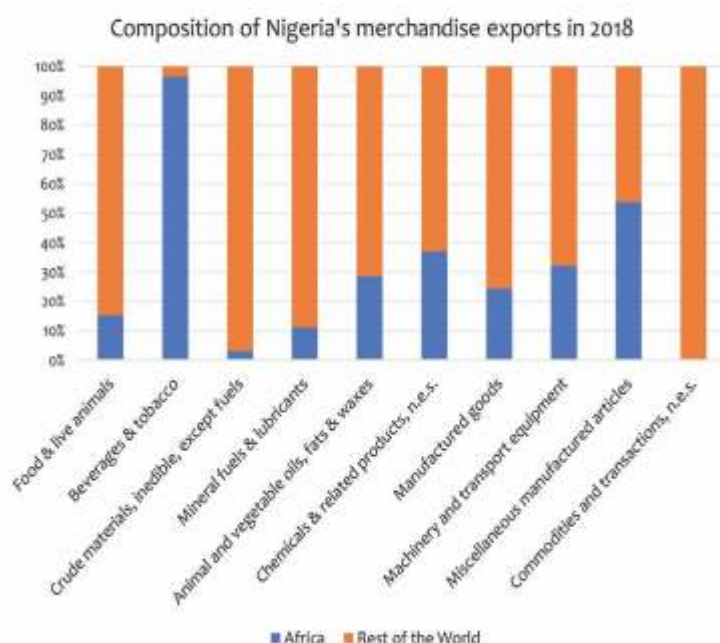
Develop a long-term industrial plan which will include in the short term, the development of industrial/agricultural processing zones

Regionalizing infrastructure investments will help reduce

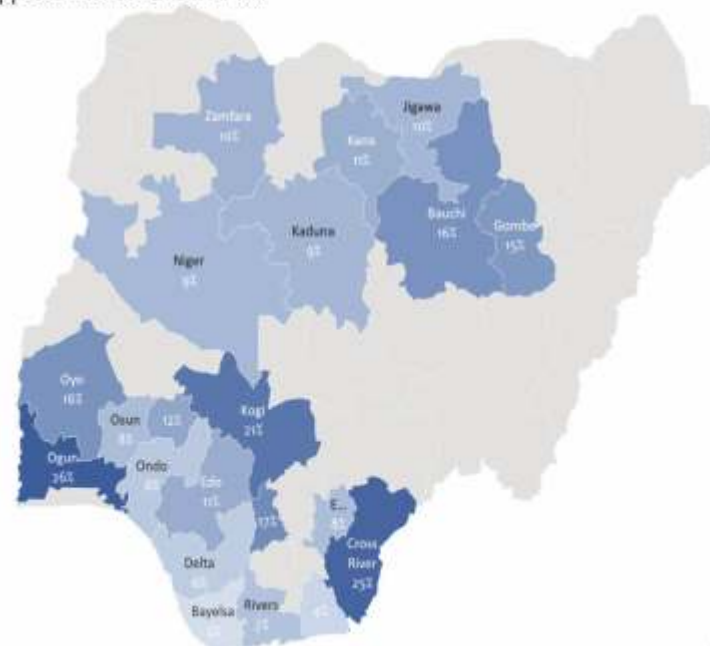
African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)

Stylized facts on Nigeria's merchandise exports

- Except for beverages and tobacco and miscellaneous manufactured goods, majority of Nigeria's merchandise exports are made to countries outside Africa.



- Ogun, Cross River and Kogi are among States with the highest manufacturing value added* in the country. *measured as share of GDP as at 2017
- Nigeria's manufacturing hubs need to grow significantly to maximize the opportunities of the AfCFTA.



infrastructure financing gaps, eliminate operational challenges associated with operating in multiple jurisdictions and attract power pools

Harmonize policies, laws and regulatory procedures to attract large-scale capital

Inter-state trade facilitation should be strengthened to support export promotion

Broad-based AfCFTA implementation will be strengthened through an effective engagement between the AfCFTA National Action Committee and State Ministries of Trade and Industry (or Investment Promotion Agencies) who are expected to maximize

the opportunities of the agreement

Other considerations:

To prevent distortions and discrimination in trade and investment, tax rights under the agreement must be mutually beneficial, including cross-jurisdiction income or profit flows such as withholding taxes on payments to non-residents.

Technical assistance, capacity building and cooperation are essential given that State governments are at different levels of capacity and development.

Dumping and the use of subsidies are rising unfair trade practices that require strong monitoring and enforcement mechanisms.



THE STATES AT A GLANCE | Kebbi

Education still my top priority in Kebbi – Gov Bagudu



Governor Abubakar Atiku Bagudu has declared that education remains top priority of his administration as he strives to touch the lives of Kebbi State indigenes.

Bagudu stated this during a symposium and inter-states quiz and essay writing competition held at the Presidential Hall in Birnin Kebbi as prelude to the commencement of Argungu International Fishing and Cultural Festival.

The governor who was represented by Chief of Staff Government House, Dr. Suleman Muhammad Argungu, expressed delight over the performance of students from Kebbi, Sokoto and Zamfara who participated in the competition.

He said: “We are excited about the performances of students in the competition.”

According to him, the Kebbi State Government, in collaboration with the World Bank have embarked on comprehensive process of bringing back out-of-school children roaming the streets

to classes.

Argungu thanked the Emir’s of Gwandu, Argungu, Yauri and Zuru for their unrelenting support and concern towards the efforts of government in reducing level of out of school children and the educational development of the girl child.

On the Argungu international fishing and cultural festival, the Chief of Staff commended Governor Bagudu for supporting the revival of the festival after 11 years of inactivity.

Earlier, Kebbi State Commissioner of Basic and Secondary Education, Alhaji Muhammad Magawatta Aleiro, said that the competition would provide an avenue for various students across different States to interact, exchange ideas and knowledge among themselves.

The Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Sa’ad Abubakar pledged to continue good relationship between the Sultanate Council and the Argungu Emirate of Kebbi state.

The Sultan was represented by Wazirin Soko-

to, Professor Sambo Junaidu at the event.

The Emir of Argungu, Alhaji Samaila Muhammadu Mera, representatives of emirs of Gwandu, Yauri and Zuru as well as civil servants, politicians and students graced the occasion.

The program was wrapped up with two paper presentation by Dr. Isa Muhammad Sama and Dr. Garba Abdullahi Kangiwa with the theme: Tourism Potentials, Economic Benefits and Sustainable Development of Argungu International Fishing and Cultural Festival.

THE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY TEAM

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The nutrition scorecard: In Summary

Tuesday February 25th came and left without incident for many people. But for the Nutritional Society of Nigeria NSN, it remains indelible in their memory. That day, the Obudu Hall of Sheraton Hotel Abuja became a beehive of activity for men in suits and women in gowns. In attendance were thirty-one (31) stakeholders and partners.

The workshop was organized to advocate for increased commitment to nutrition. The dialogue consisted of five (5) substantive sessions, each covering an important facet of the nutrition scorecard development. Participants in the dialogue came from the government, civil society, as well as national and international agencies. The meeting started at exactly 9:50am.

The objectives of the workshop were; to present a draft of scorecard indicators for inputs and to familiarize a wider net of state actors with the content of the scorecard for better ownership and seamless data sourcing once the scorecard is launched. The discussions in each session were lively with contributions rained from a wide range of participants.

Key Action Points from the Workshop:

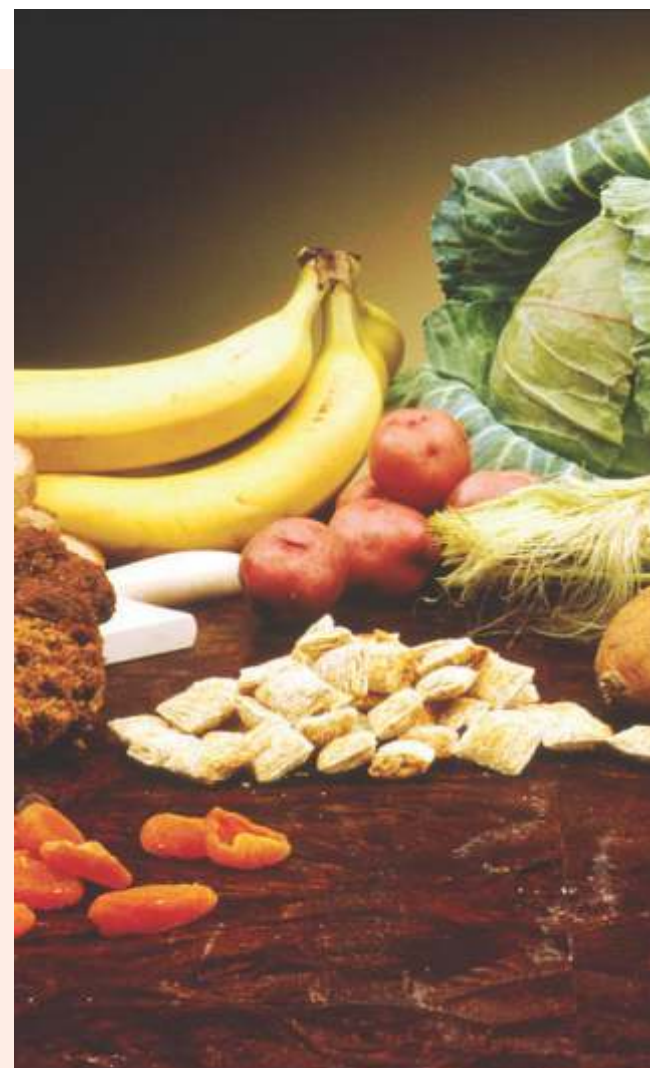
1. Dissemination of workshop report
2. Analysis of all the feedbacks from the workshop to finalize indicators for the nutrition scorecard
3. Development of data collection instrument following the finalization of indicators
4. Familiarize Permanent Secretaries from Ministries of Budget and Planning across states with indicators and data collection tool through a second workshop
5. Strategize on ways of supporting Forum of State Committees of Food and Nutrition for knowledge sharing and learning
6. Desk study of number of states with Ministries of Planning compared to those with Planning Commissions to be done with Federal Ministry of Budget and Planning.

BACKGROUND

Spewing from the strength of the NGF, as a platform where the 36 Nigerian Governors collaborate on public policy, promote good governance, and share learnings across states, the NGF prioritized nutrition in 2018, focusing on 5 commitments:

- (1) setting up state committees on food and nutrition,
- (2) establishing multisectoral nutrition plans,
- (3) increasing, budgetary spending on nutrition interventions,
- (4) promoting six months of paid maternity leave for civil servants, and
- (5) placing creches in ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs.)

The NGF secretariat as the technical and administrative arm of the Forum supports the forum with quality evidence for informed decision-making and facilitates uptake of best practices. Drawing on the successes of the scorecard developed for Universal Health Coverage and Polio, the NGF



Secretariat aims to catalyse sustained action in nutrition through the development of a Nutrition scorecard to track the commitments of the NGF.

Data for Decisions to Expand Nutrition Transformation (DataDENT) is a five-year project (2017-2022) funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation that is contributing towards the ultimate goal of a functional Data Value Chain (DVC) for nutrition that enables decision makers at global and national levels to prioritize resources, plan actions, monitor implementation and evaluate impact. DataDENT is implemented by three institutions: Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), and Results for Development (R4D).

Strategically aligned, the NGF Secretariat and DataDENT jointly organized this stakeholders' workshop.

INTRODUCTION

The Executive Director, Strategy and Research, of the NGF. Alhaji L.O.T. Shittu in his address, welcomed everyone to the workshop and spoke about the importance of nutrition, placing emphasis



The nutrition scorecard

on population as Nigeria's greatest resource which must be invested in through human capital development to realise its enormous potential.

He highlighted the current burden of malnutrition among under-five children in Nigeria and its effect on productivity thereby urging everyone to work to optimize the nutritional state of people in Nigeria in order to enhance productivity. He also spoke about the NGF secretariat and its competent workforce. In his address, He emphasized the multisectoral nature of nutrition and expressed his hope that the meeting will provide a positive and impactful feedback regarding the development of the nutrition scorecard.

GOODWILL MESSAGE:

Head of Nutrition, Federal Ministry of Health, Dr Isokpunwu, started his address by appreciating everyone present and emphasized that nutritional issues are not a one-man fight but rather multisectoral and requires the cooperation of all sectors. He stated that the implementation lies at the state level as there is little that the national body can do. He also drove home the point on the importance of using pictorial representations to emphasize and clarify points and this he hoped that the meeting will achieve using the proposed scorecards.



PRESENTATION 1: THE OVERVIEW OF WORKSHOP AND SCORECARD THEORY OF CHANGE



By Dr Ahmad, Senior Health Advisor, NGF

He began an expository session on the scorecard theory of change. He explained the interest of the NGF in Nutrition and mentioned that the issue of nutrition has not been given its proper place of value in Nigeria. He emphasized nutrition as a key ingredient in Nigeria's growth and explained its impact of the economic growth. He further explained the magnitude of the burden of malnutrition in Nigeria stating that Nigeria has the 2nd highest burden of stunted children in the world and also compared Nigeria's nutrition statistics with some low and middle-income countries (LMICs) which showed that Nigeria

compared poorly. In his words, 'the time to act is not even now, the time to act was yesterday'. He however stated that it was not too late to begin to act. He mentioned that often, people see nutrition as a health intervention but hammered on the fact that nutrition is multisectoral with the involvement of various ministries such as the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Water Resources, Ministry of Women Affairs and Ministry of Agriculture.

He reaffirmed the commitment of the NGF to the issue of nutrition earlier stated by the ED of the NGF in his welcome address and highlighted the five commitments the NGF is looking to promote to impact nutrition positively at the State level. These are;

- To set up/ revitalise State Committees on Food and Nutrition (SCFN)
- To establish state multisectoral nutrition plans
- To increase budgetary spending on nutrition interventions
- To promote 6 months of maternity leave for civil servants
- To place creches in ministries, departments and agencies

He charged the stakeholders to contribute more ideas regarding the various commitment points. He expressed joy in the fact that the Ministry of Budget and Planning were present at the meeting as they will help shed more light on the third commitment. He explained that the selection of commitments was based on the enabling environment for nutrition that was more relevant to the Governors.

He briefly touched on some of the achievements of the NGF Secretariat in catalysing establishment of health insurance agencies in states. He explained that the process by which the nutrition scorecard would improve the decision making of Governors in nutrition and ultimately set the stage for better outcomes in nutrition. He concluded by giving insights into the core objectives of the workshop.

DRAFT INDICATORS

The NGF's Program Officer for Health, Dr Gianni Dongo, in leading this session shed light on the indicators that were being proposed to track the NGF's commitments in nutrition. He began by pointing out that the preparation of the draft indicators was a team effort and involved a robust process that included the following steps;

Continued on page 9



A WORD FOR THE NORTH EAST

What Inuwa Yahaya told his colleagues

Governors of states in the North-East sub-region- Adamawa, Borno, Bauchi Gombe, Taraba and Yobe, under the North-East Governors' Consultative Forum, recently resolved to take all necessary steps to ensure peace and security and improved socio-economic development in the sub-region.

All six governors of states in the sub-region were present at the maiden meeting of the Forum which took place at Government House Gombe except that of Taraba State who was represented by his Deputy.

It was Chaired by Gombe State Governor Muhammad Inuwa Yahaya, after which a 13-point communique in which the Governors, amongst other issues, ordered their states Attorneys-General to meet and harmonise laws that would address the security challenges that have bedevilled the sub-region for over a decade.

Below is the full speech read by Yahaya Inuwa:

It is my great pleasure to warmly welcome Your Excellencies, my dear colleagues from Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Taraba and Yobe States to this historic, all-important occasion.

2. The aim of this historic consultative meeting is to close ranks among our States and chart a way forward for the North-East subregion, it will give us the chance to interface and dialogue on the ways to follow in order to attain our aspirations and objectives.

3. Over the last decade, the North-East subregion has been in the news for various reasons. A devastating insurgency that kills thousands of people and displaces millions, debilitating climate change effects that endanger the livelihood of millions of people along the Chad basin and beyond, coupled with desertification with its attendant environmental damage has led to a systematic decline in the quality of life of our people, making the NE the most underdeveloped subregion in the country.

4. As leaders, we have to take on these challenges with all sense of responsibility. More so because, the things that unite us are far more than the ones that divide us. We are one people bound by common geography, history and destiny. Poverty, disease, hunger and agony have no eyes. The resultant effect of all these which originated from the BH insurgency has led to the current state of dilapidation in the quality of life of our people.

5. The prevailing security situation poses an existential threat to our subregion. And therefore, necessitate the need for us to convene this gathering in order to come up with a united front that can address our collective challenges as a subregion. I'm sincerely grateful to my colleagues and brothers from Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Yobe



AS

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and Taraba States for answering this call. History will remember us for this bold initiative

6. The security situation and its attendant humanitarian effects usher in a donor industry that has its pros and cons. On one side, donor agencies provide the much-needed interventions to stabilize our communities and prevent an all-out humanitarian emergency, on the other side, some unscrupulous elements/entities are seeking to commercialize the suffering of our people. The solutions, my dear colleague and brothers, is not to throw away the baby with the bathwater. The solution lies in our ability to create, implement and enforce a common regional framework for coordinating donor-driven humanitarian interventions across our subregion. I have already shared these concerns privately with all of you at different fora. On our part, Gombe State has created an office to properly coordinate the activities of donor agencies and development partners. Even as we remain grateful to our local and international partners for their help, the solutions to our problems must spring from within rather than outside, if it has to be sustained.

7. Another corollary to the security situation and under-development in the North-East is the establishment of the North East Development Commission, the NEDC. We are grateful to the President and the national as-



A WORD FOR THE NORTH EAST

sembly for this timely intervention. But beyond all the slogans, we must be willing to learn lessons from our history. For the NEDC to position itself as a truly development agency that is capable of creating positive impacts on our people, it must avoid the pitfalls of similar agencies like the NDDC in the Niger Delta. The NEDC should operate as a unique driver of development in the subregion. This can be achieved by creating a strong synergy with all our States and promoting wider consultation among relevant stakeholders. The objective of the NEDC should not be just to execute projects, but to execute those projects that have immediate impacts on our population, that increase the resilience and capacity of our people and institutions to deal with both present and emerging challenges.

8. Your excellencies, the issue of the Lake Chad Basin is another topic that affects our livelihood on a regional scale. Over the past 6 decades since independence, the Lake Chad has shrunk to 1/10th of its original size. This deteriorating state of affairs pose serious threats to our security and livelihood. The shrinking Lake Chad Basin has led to the loss of livelihoods for millions of our people who rely on the Lake Chad for food as farmers, fishermen and traders. It has also led to declining fauna and flora, thus pushing our nomadic population south-ward, bringing them into contact with farmers and exacerbating farmer-herder tensions with all its awful consequences. The Lake Chad is no less an international issue as it is regional to us, and we must maintain close collaboration with our neighbors in the Chad basin through the federal government to reverse the receding basin and the debilitating effects that are fueled by climate change. The solution to this problem is generational, it cannot be achieved in one single term or by a single government. That's why we launch a tree planting campaign in Gombe that is committed to planting 4 million trees under the Gombe Goes Green Initiative, to combat desertification, soil erosion and deforestation. Efforts are also in place to phase out firewood and tree-felling in order to transit our people to sustainable energy sources.

9. Power supply is another issue of great concern to our people. Electricity is one of the biggest enablers of development through large scale industrialization and the proliferation of small-scale businesses. Our ongoing challenges with power transmission and distribution have been of great concern to all of us. While we are open to developing and diversifying our energy mix in order to power our homes and industries, we should work towards creating the enabling environment for peace, stability and economic development in our subregion.

10. The issue of the Mambilla Hydropower plant is central to the development and industrialization of our region and the country at large. As the largest such project in the country and the second largest in Africa, the project offers great opportunity towards regional energy

independence and prosperity. We are glad to hear that all the legal issues surrounding the project have been resolved and the project will soon takeoff. Our people have been waiting for this for too long. Given the size of the project and the potential impacts it will have on regional and local economy, we are pleased by the executive order 5 signed by Mr. President requiring international companies to ensure 30% local content participation in all projects. This opens up a lot of opportunities for our artisans, engineers, welders, fabricators, suppliers, manufacturers across all segments of the entire project value chain. On our part, we have to do everything to prepare our people so as to take good advantage of those opportunities.

11. The discovery of oil in the North-East has been received with great fanfare by our people. Oil and gas no doubt open up a new window of opportunity for our people, but it also comes with its own challenges. The narrative of resource curse in the developing world (especially Africa) is one that we must all try to avoid. The experience of the Niger Delta is there for all of us to see. We have seen how oil exploration without commensurate investment in the development of local host communities endangered the livelihood of our indigenous communities and created an explosive cocktail of social, political and economic discontents.

12. To avoid this scenario, we need to promote collective ownership and shared responsibility in the management of our region's oil wealth. This means, first investing in the welfare and education of host communities to enable them drive the process and committing oil companies to a set of best practices in oil exploration, exploitation, environment management and sustainability.

13. Today, our subregion stands on the crucible of history, at a moment of serious challenges. But beyond those challenges lies great opportunities. Our subregion is well endowed with a fertile land and precious solid minerals, coupled with our hardworking and industrious people, the challenge is now on us leaders to harness our tremendous human and material potential a colossal scale that will put our region on the path of long-term growth and sustainable peace and prosperity. This dream, my dear colleagues and brothers, is achievable only if we come together via a united front that is galvanized to confront our challenges. The decisions we make as leaders today will determine the fate of our region tomorrow. The ball is now in our courts.

14. Once again, I thank all my colleagues for honoring our invitation. It is my belief that the outcome of this consultation will open a new chapter of cooperation and development for our people. I wish everyone a safe return to their various destinations.





THE NUTRITION SCORECARD...



- Desk Reviews: He mentioned that the team studied the national nutrition policies, global and national data sets and sources to understand the nutrition landscape.

- Consultations: He added that the team had extensive consultations with Federal MDAs and partners as well as state representatives to understand those key challenges in the nutrition landscape that are relevant to the Governors. He mentioned that these conversations were instrumental in identifying the commitments

- Mapped Key Milestones: He also elaborated on how the team worked together to list out the key steps needed to fully achieve each commitment and then brainstorm on ways to track effectiveness of achieving them.

He explained that some of the criteria that the team used in whittling down these indicators were:

- Meaningful and Relevant
- Easily Understood
- Timely/Time bound
- Measurable
- Data Availability

Setting up SCFN Establishing multisectoral plans; Increasing budgetary spending; Promoting 6 months maternity leave for civil servants; Placing creches in MDAs

HE ADDED THAT THE TEAM HAD EXTENSIVE CONSULTATIONS WITH FEDERAL MDAS AND PARTNERS AS WELL AS STATE REPRESENTATIVES TO UNDERSTAND THOSE KEY CHALLENGES IN THE NUTRITION LANDSCAPE THAT ARE RELEVANT TO THE GOVERNORS. HE MENTIONED THAT THESE CONVERSATIONS WERE INSTRUMENTAL IN IDENTIFYING THE COMMITMENTS

1. Regular participation from all nutrition relevant MDAs

1. List of nutrition activities from nutrition relevant MDAs prepared and copy sent to SCFN
 1. Nutrition activities identified for budgetary tracking
 1. 6-month maternity leave for civil servants with at least 66% of pay, and, upon return to work, half an hour twice a day during working hours to breastfeed
 1. At least one creche established in the State Secretariat or in every MDA

2. Quarterly meetings where the Permanent Secretary of



THE NUTRITION SCORECARD...

MBP attends as Chair

2. Plan developed in consultation with nutrition relevant MDAs, costed, and funding sources identified
2. Budget allocated towards nutrition programs increases by X percent
2. 6-month maternity leave for civil servants with full pay, and, upon return to work, half an hour twice a day during working hours to breastfeed
2. Every creche in state-level institutions is fitted with a nursing room
3. Annual workplan developed to support the implementation of multisectoral plan
3. Plan mainstreamed into annual and medium-term sectoral strategies of nutrition relevant MDAs
3. At minimum, X percent of funds budgeted for nutrition activities is released
3. Annual increase in continued breastfeeding rates (6-24 months) among civil servants
4. Annual funding secured to support the implementation of annual workplan
4. Annual stakeholder meeting conducted to review progress
4. Total nutrition spending per child in the state increases by X percentage points

QUESTIONS ARISING FROM PRESENTATION

1) Dr. Adeyinka Onabolu, Senior Advisor, Food Security and Nutrition FMARD commented on establishing multisectoral plans. She stressed that each sector must first develop its own nutrition specific plan that can then be harmonised into a state specific plan. She opined that the state Ministry of Environment should be included as part of the MDAs tracked as nutrition relevant in the SCFN.

She added that the term 'nutrition related activities' in the 1st indicator for the 3rd commitment(budget) did not pass or convey the necessary information and suggested the use of 'programs or projects' as they can easily be tracked.

2) Mr Sam Yuwa, National Vice President, Nutrition Society of Nigeria asked if the arrival of the various commitments will be in phases. And if they are looking towards addressing general nutritional issues relating to diet in the states such as Diabetes and other Diet-Related non communicable diseases.

3) Dr Oluseyi Abejide, Advocacy Manager of Save



the Children said that she was curious about how the rate of Exclusive breastfeeding among civil servants would be measured and how the commitments will be tracked for proper linkages when the final presentations are made.

4) Dr Christopher John, Desk Officer, SUBEB talked about the establishment of State Committees on Food and Nutrition and explained that it currently exists in Delta State however that the major issue that always came up, was ensuring that the sectors work together.

SUBEB TALKED ABOUT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF STATE COMMITTEES ON FOOD AND NUTRITION AND EXPLAINED THAT IT CURRENTLY EXISTS IN DELTA STATE HOWEVER THAT THE MAJOR ISSUE THAT ALWAYS CAME UP, WAS ENSURING THAT THE SECTORS WORK TOGETHER

RESPONSES TO THE QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

1) Dr Gianni responded to the first question by saying that the NGF encourages a comprehensive plan and acknowledged that each sector must first identify their contribution to nutrition. He appreciated the suggestion to include the Ministry of Environment and encouraged other participants to utilise the group session to capture their inputs also.

2) He responded to the second question by mentioning that the scorecard will primarily prioritise enablers that are relevant to the Governors but would be supported by a select outcome dashboard. He mentioned that his contribution would be helpful when thinking through which indicators to prioritise for the outcome dashboard.

3) Dr Gianni stated that measuring or tracking the annual increase in breastfeeding rate as a result of these commitments might be challenging and welcomed ideas and possible solutions during the group interactions.

GROUP DISCUSSION -The participants were divided into three groups.

Group 1: State Committee for food and Nutrition and Establishing Multisectoral



Plan

PLENARY SESSION: PRESENTATION OF GROUP OUTPUTS, STRATEGY FOR DATA COLLECTION AND FREQUENCY OF COLLECTION

GROUP ONE



Group 2: Budget and Planning

Group 3: Maternity Protection

Group Rapporteur: Dr Adeyinka Onobolu, Senior Advisor, Food Security and Nutrition, FMARD.

In her presentation, the following recommendations were made by the members of group 1

- 'Establishment of SCFN' was suggested to be the first indicator for commitment 1
- The first indicator "List of nutrition activities from nutrition relevant MDAs prepared and copy sent to SCFN" for 2nd commitment was recommended for removal because they felt that since it is a multisectoral plan, they did not see the need to give points to a list of nutrition activities.

- She recommended also that a minimum amount of funds be set a lower limit to fund the annual work-plan of the SCFN.

Challenges Considered

1) Human Resource: The capacity of those available to do the work was questioned as it was pointed out that there were no nutrition personnel available for planning nutrition activities due to the claim that nutrition personnel prefer to work in hospitals instead of MDAs.

2) No Nutrition Departments at the MDAs

GROUP TWO

Group Rapporteur: Dr Salisu Ladan – Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning, Katsina

The group rapporteur in his presentation, the following recommendations were made by the members of group three:

- Agreement on all four indicators.
 - 1st Indicator - "Nutrition activities identified for budgetary tracking"
 - Recommendation of five intervention from five sectors (Agriculture, Health, Women Affairs)
 - Data sources should be appropriation bill and frequency should be quarterly
 - 2nd Indicator – "Budget allocated towards nutrition programs increases by X percent"
 - There should be a 50% increase annually.
 - Problem of data accessibility.
 - Recommendation: upload of data online.
 - 3rd Indicator – "At minimum, X percent of funds budgeted for nutrition activities is released"
 - 75% of the budget should be directed towards Nutrition sensitive priority interventions.
 - Frequency of data should be quarterly.
 - A major challenge was timely upload of general report.
 - 4th Indicator – "Total nutrition spending per child in the state increases by X percentage points"
 - There should be an 100% increase in the total amount spent per child.
 - External source of finance to finance Nutritional program.
- He concluded his presentation by saying that a rating scale should be proposed to track states' commitment to nutrition and also suggested that surveys and empirical data should be generated in a way that is presentable to the governors and encouraged everyone to be result oriented.

Oluseyi Abejide, Advocacy Manager, Save the Children suggested that the state burden of malnutrition be put into consideration in terms of funding.



THE NUTRITION SCORECARD...



GROUP THREE

Group Rapporteur: Hajia Binta Nuraini - Director, Child Development, Ministry of Women Affairs, Kano

In her presentation, the following recommendations were made by the members of group three:

- Six months maternity leave of civil servant with full paid salary. However, after the fourth child the maternity leave would be three months leave with a full paid salary.
- 10 working days paternity leave with full paid salary and after the fourth child the paternity leave would still continue since the number of days was not much.
- Frequency of data should be quarterly.
- Data source for the 6 months maternity leave should be via circular
- Data source for the creche should be State Ministry of Women Affairs or Youth Development
- Functional Creche established in the secretariat and various MDA's
- Private public partnerships for the establishment and management of creches in which the government takes care of building the facility while parents and caregiver pay a token for the payment of the salaries of the workers.
- SCFN to validate data of functionality of creches and maternity leave

- Merging of indicator 4&5.
- Changing of the term maternity protection to maternity/paternity protection.
- Some of the challenges observed were:
 - Quality Assurance to meet up to Standard and monitored periodically and other relevant ministries by the SCFN.
 - Provision of an annual budget for Creche.

Questions and Comments Arisen from Group Three's Presentation

1) Dr Khadijah Alarape, PC AN-RIN Oyo State raised Concerns that mothers who take maternity leave after 4 kids would not be able to exclusively breastfeed their child for six months thus excluding children born after four kids from EBF.

2) Dr Adeyinka Onabolu Senior Advisor, Food Security and Nutrition, FMARD raised concerns about the proposed merging of indicator 4&5 because they both have their own objectives.

3) Dr Sam Yuwa, National Vice President, Nutrition Society of Nigeria suggested that due to the family planning and population control, people with more than four children should not be given any incentive.

4) Mrs Adeola Oyewunmi, Senior Agric Officer, FMARD asked why the 6 months maternity leave is only focused on the public sector and not both the public and private sectors and stated that there is a need to consider those working in the private firms.

Responses to The Questions/Comments Raised Above

1) Dr Chizoba Steve-Edemba, Nutrition Specialist, UNICEF responded to the fourth question stating that only the state level was being considered because governors cannot mandate private sectors to implement the policy.

2) Toyin Adewale, Technical Advisor, Alive and Thrive stated that maternity and paternity protections were primarily focused on enhancing exclusive breastfeeding since the first 6moths is the most important for a child as most mothers stop breastfeeding after 6months and corresponding to the first question, she said that there is a need for checks to be put in place to prevent abuse and also for population control and for cases of polygamy in which a man have more than one wife.

OUTCOME INDICATORS FOR THE NUTRITION SCORECARD

Presented by: Mrs Oreh Chinekwu, Health Specialist of the NGF and Dr Yas-hodhara Rana, Senior Program Officer, DataDENT

Mrs Oreh started by stating the benefit of outcomes adding that outcomes will

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AGRICULTURE, KEY TO POVERTY REDUCTION IN NIGERIA

By Tunde Akande

The United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goal One (SDG1) is focused on eradicating all forms of poverty worldwide. While the number of people living in extreme poverty has dropped by more than half between 1990 and 2015, too many people are still struggling for the most basic human needs.

According to the UN, as of 2014, there were still about 1.2 billion people living in extreme poverty on less than US\$1.25 a day, with many lacking food, potable drinking water and basic sanitation.

The UN defines poverty as “A denial of choices, opportunities and a violation of human dignity. Lacking basic capacity to participate effectively in society, not having enough to feed and clothe a family, not having a school or clinic to attend, not having land on which to grow one’s food or a job to earn one’s living and not having access to credit. Poverty proffers insecurity, powerlessness and exclusion of individuals, households and communities.

While rapid growth in countries such as China and India have lifted millions out of poverty, progress has however been somewhat limited in other regions such as South East Asia and Sub Saharan Africa, which still account for about 80% of those living in extreme poverty. Unfortunately, 14 out of 18 countries in the world where the number of extreme poor is rising are in Africa.

The main challenge in Africa is that poverty remains concentrated in just a handful of fast-growing developing countries. The continent already accounts for almost two-thirds of the world’s extreme poor. If the current trends persist, Africans will account for almost 90% of the world’s extreme poor by the year 2030.

The lofty objectives of the SDG 1 goal, to end extreme poverty by 2030 is unlikely to be met, as a consequence of growing extreme poverty rates in countries in Sub Saharan Africa.

In 2018, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Goalkeepers Report projected that by 2050, more than 40% of the extremely poor people in the world will live in just two countries, namely Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

In the same vein, according to a recent report by the Brookings Institution, data from the World Poverty Clock in 2018, show that Nigeria has emerged as the poverty capital of the world and is now the country with the highest number of poor people in the world, overtaking India.

The report shows that Nigeria now has about 87 million people living in poverty compared with India’s 73 million.

It is also worthy of note, that while extreme poverty in Nigeria continues to grow by 6 people every minute the sun rises, poverty in India continues to decline. The report further projects that in the not too distant future, the



DRC could soon overtake India from the second position.

Nigeria’s Huge Agricultural Potentials

The recent outbreak of the Coronavirus (COVID 19) that started in China a few months ago, might have profound implications and dire consequences for the Nigerian economy, with the grave potential to increase the growing number of people living in abject poverty in the country.

The worldwide outbreak of the virus from all indications, portends a major threat to the country’s macroeconomic fundamentals, the impact of which may yet be systemic and far reaching.

Already the inability of Saudi Arabia and Russia to agree on proposed oil production cuts has led to a tailspin in the international price of crude oil, with Bonny Light, Nigeria’s premium oil grade trading at US\$36.49 as at March 12, 2020. This price was about US\$20.51 (36%) per barrel lower than the US\$57 benchmark which the country’s budget was predicated on.

With oil revenue accounting for about 90% of the govern-

...KEY TO POVERTY REDUCTION IN NIGERIA

ment's foreign exchange earnings and the key driver of foreign reserves accretion, the headwinds, as a consequence of the crude oil price crash will in no small measure severely limit the supply of dollars (US\$) to the economy, resulting in illiquidity in the market, speculative buying, hoarding and arbitrage of the greenback.

As anticipated, the crash in global oil prices and the country's rising debt profile has triggered international concern about the economic future of the country. Already, naysayers are quick to predict that in the short term, the fall in oil prices will quicken devaluation of the Naira, based on speculations that the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) had earlier set a US\$30 billion foreign reserves threshold before contemplating any currency devaluation. With the foreign reserves at US\$36.17 billion as at March 10, 2020, the country it seems, might be nearing a precipice. While on the longer term, they predict that the effects will be more profound with the country at the cliff edge of a second economic recession in four years, since 2016.

There is no greater time to diversify the economy away from its dependence on hydrocarbons than this moment. Agriculture remains the most viable and sustainable means of economic diversification and poverty reduction in the country at this time.

The aftermath of the economic recession of 2016 showed the role, agriculture can play in economic diversification and poverty alleviation in the country.

Concerted efforts by the Federal Government and the CBN in the launch and implementation of the Anchor Borrowers' Programme to specifically support smallholder farmers was indeed a step in the right direction.

Data from the CBN shows that the contribution of agriculture to the country's Total Real Gross Domestic Product (GDP), gradually increased from 24.45% recorded in 2015, to 25.08% in 2016, 25.13% in 2017 peaking at 25.16% in 2018. There seemed to be a slowdown in momentum as there was a decline in 2019 as agriculture contributed only 23.11% to the nation's Total Real GDP.

Agriculture as Percentage Contribution of Total Real GDP

| Year | Percentage (%) |
|------|----------------|
| 2015 | 24.45 |
| 2016 | 25.08 |
| 2017 | 25.13 |
| 2018 | 25.16 |
| 2019 | 23.11 |

Source: Central Bank of Nigeria



With the seemingly, likely, economic headwinds in the foreseeable future, there is no gainsaying that the country needs to double down on its agricultural potentials, promotion and development with renewed vigor, once again, for long term sustainable growth and sound diversification of the economy.

Empirical evidence abounds, showing that a thriving agricultural system would cut poverty drastically, create millions of new jobs, and drive economic growth.

This tends to support the fact, that if agriculture and agrobusiness are aggressively and sincerely pursued, Nigeria should in no time, give up her ignoble position as the poverty capital of the world.

An economic future with agriculture as its fulcrum is certainly achievable in Nigeria.

Evidence Abound

There are lots of evidences worldwide that buttress the fact that agriculture can contribute to poverty reduction, beyond a direct effect on farmers' incomes. Agricultural development can stimulate





...KEY TO POVERTY REDUCTION IN NIGERIA



economic development outside of the agricultural sector, and lead to higher job and growth creation. Increased productivity of agriculture, raises farm incomes, increases food supply, reduces food prices and provides greater employment opportunities in rural, peri-urban and urban areas.

Such linkages between growth in the agricultural sector and the wider economy have enabled developing countries to diversify to other sectors where growth is higher and wages are better.

Indeed the 2008 World Development Report entitled "Agriculture for Development" pointed out succinctly that it was time to put agriculture on the front burner, at the heart of the development agenda because economic growth within agriculture is at least twice as effective as growth within other sectors with regards to reducing poverty.

In addition, a study conducted by the Nordic Africa Institute in 2010, shows that agriculture is even more important than previously believed for lifting people out of poverty. The study which covered about 80 countries and extended over a period of 20 years, highlighted that growth within agriculture in low income countries can be five times as effective as growth within other sectors in terms of poverty reduction among those who are worse off.

The study also reported that for Sub-Saharan Africa in particular, agriculture is estimated to be at least ten times more effective than any other occupations at lifting the worst off, out of poverty and destitution.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) also stresses the importance of improving productivity within small scale agriculture. The UN agency indicates that increased productivity in agriculture would contribute to lower, local food prices, thereby reducing poverty for those not working in agriculture. Also, since small scale agriculture is often labour inten-

sive, increased productivity would result in increased employment especially in the rural areas.

Most of the fact-based evidence available, however sound a note of caution, that historically, no poor country has effectively reduced poverty only through agriculture, but almost none, have achieved it without increasing agricultural productivity in the first instance.

Agricultural growth is thus an essential complement and precursor to growth in other key sectors.

AFTER THE END OF THE BITTER CIVIL WAR IN 1994, AGRICULTURE HAS BECOME THE BACKBONE OF THE RWANDAN ECONOMY AND CONTINUES TO SIGNIFICANTLY CONTRIBUTE TO POVERTY ALLEVIATION ...

The Rwanda Example

After the end of the bitter civil war in 1994, agriculture has become the backbone of the Rwandan economy and continues to significantly contribute to poverty alleviation as the country aspires to become a middle-income country by the end of 2020. Over the past 10 years, the country has used agriculture to take over 1 million people out of extreme poverty, by focusing on expanding the sector rapidly.

Since 2009, the country has been able to effectively adopt the Maputo Declaration with budgetary allocation of over 10% going into agriculture. As a result, of the increased funding by government, support from development agencies and private sector investments, Rwanda was able to double agricultural production and attain food security by the year 2010, just 16 years after the end of the brutal civil war. As at today, the country does not rely on imports to feed itself.

These efforts have ensured that agricultural commercialization has expanded, allowing for rapid export growth, smallholder farmers' incomes have risen by almost 50%, leading to the country been able to cut the extreme poverty rate by 14% in just

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Governor Yahaya Bello in a handshake with Douye Diri of Bayelsa State, while Prof Babagana Zulum of Borno State looks on.



The DG NGF, AB Okauru in a handshake with NYSC Director-General, Brigadier General Shuaibu Ibrahim



L-R: Chairman NGF, Dr Kayode Fayemi; Atiku Bagudu of Kebbi and their Kogi counterpart, Yahaya Bello



Borno State Governor, Prof Babagana Zulum (left) exchanging pleasantries with State Governor, Adegboyega Oyetola before commencement of the NGF meet



L-R: Governors Okezie Ikpeazu of Abia State, Dave Umahi of Ebonyi, Umar Fintiri of Adamawa and Bala Mohammed of Bauchi State.



The Minister of Finance, Zainab Ahmed (left) with the DG NGF, AB Okauru

PHOTO SPEAK

MONTHLY PUBLICATION



DG NGF, AB Okauru presenting a birthday card to the Governor of Abia State, Mallam Nasir el-Rufai.



L-R: Governors of Bayelsa, Osun and Abia States, Douye Diri, Adegboyega Oyetola and Okezie Ikpeazu during celebration at the NGFS.



The Minister of Finance, Zainab Ahmed addressing a cross-section of Governors and other invited guests.



The DG NGF, AB Okauru presenting a birthday card to the Chairman of the forum and Governor of Ekiti State, Dr Kayode Fayemi



The DG, NGF, AB Kaduna State Governor, Mallam Nasir el-Rufai making a point



Delta State Governor, Ifeanyi Okowa (right) in a handshake with Douye Diri while NGF Chairman, Kayode Fayemi looks on



...KEY TO POVERTY REDUCTION IN NIGERIA

5 years between 2006 and 2011. While the rural poverty rate also fell from 61.9% to 48.7% in the same period according to World Bank reports.

Support to Smallholder Farmers key to Poverty Reduction

Across Sub Saharan Africa, smallholder farmers, account for majority of the farmers especially in the rural areas. In Nigeria, smallholder farmers dominate the agricultural space and account for about 90% of the agricultural activities, albeit using low technology farming skills and manual labour.

Research has shown that one of the surefire ways to use agriculture as an effective tool for poverty reduction is to support smallholder farmers. This opinion has been chorused over the years by Bill Gates, whose Foundation, has continuously supported the development of agriculture as an effective tool to help poor farmers grow, dramatically reduce suffering and build self-sufficiency. He has been quoted as saying, that greater worldwide concerted support for investments in agriculture was needed, as the best weapon against hunger and poverty.

Some of the strategies to support smallholder farmers, especially in Sub Saharan Africa includes the following:

1. Move from primary agriculture to early stage agro-processing – for a sustainable growth in the sector and improvement in the economic conditions of smallholder farmers in the rural and peri-urban areas, there is a need to encourage light processing of foodstuffs by supporting economic activities within storage, processing, packaging, access to markets, which can give smallholder farmers new income streams which yields profitability to their activities.

2. Access to finance – in most cases smallholder farmers don't have reliable access to finance and very little potential for obtaining credit facilities from the formal banking system. There is thus a need to encourage smallholder farmers to come together and set up savings and loan

groups to augment their funding requirements. This model has worked in many climes and should help farmers imbibe savings and repayment cultures and not see formal credit as their share of national cakes not to be repaid.

3. Better organized farmer groups – many commodity associations are in most cases a potpourri of people with diverse opinions and no real shared objectives. In many situations, smallholder farmer groups are poorly organized and therefore marginal-

ized in the scheme of things. This invariably limits their political influence and more often than not, they have very little scope to demand political responsibilities. Better coordination of smallholder farmer groups would most certainly make them stronger, more knowledgeable about new planting and processing techniques, easier for their members to access new established markets and provide a healthier bargaining power with offtakers & aggregators for selling their produce.

4. Gender Mainstreaming – women need to be allowed to play a greater role in agriculture as many of them are left behind, when men migrate to urban cities for greener pastures. Empirical evidence has also shown that the whole family often benefits when women achieve some form of earning power. Women generally allocate more money for food, healthcare and education, giving children better access to nutrition and education for the girl child. Harvests from men are also generally higher than that of women because the

men often have better access to labour, information, inputs and machinery. The men also have access to the most fertile lands available for cultivation. Increased gender awareness will lead to effective poverty reduction and increase sustainability and productivity in the agricultural sector. The position of women in agriculture needs to be strengthened and their knowledge, skills and experience utilized.

5. Access to Infrastructure/Technical Assistance – there is a need to help the poor smallholder farmers in the rural areas improve their general entrepreneurship skills by improving their access to hard and soft infrastructure, such as irrigation, rural feeder roads, storage and processing facilities for increased market integration, creation of more formal relationships between farmers and agro-processors, adaptation of more modern planting, production and harvesting techniques.



GENDER MAINSTREAMING – WOMEN NEED TO BE ALLOWED TO PLAY A GREATER ROLE IN AGRICULTURE AS MANY OF THEM ARE LEFT BEHIND, WHEN MEN MIGRATE TO URBAN CITIES FOR GREENER PASTURES





THE STATES AT A GLANCE | Niger

Gov Sani Bello inaugurates 38 mass transit buses



Governor Abubakar Sani Bello of Niger State recently launched thirty-eight buses to boost the fleet of the State's transport authority.

Speaking at the occasion, the Governor appealed to the Federal Government to complete the Baro Port project in the interest of national development.

The state transport authority known to be one of the best government-owned transport

agencies, because of its affordability and reliability, had lost its pride due to poor management and lackadaisical attitude of the staff.

This informed the present administration's decision to revamp the public transportation for effective and efficient service delivery.

Governor Abubakar Sani Bello said the initiative is to further boost the capacity of the authority,

and charged the management to ensure accountability as the fund used to acquire the facility is a loan and not grant.

"The easy movement of people and goods is a necessity that we shall continue to pursue to stimulate economic growth, while the government will further impose a phase on unsafe modes of transportation in our major towns to be replaced with taxis and mini buses," he said.

Governor Sani Bello said his administration will continue to seek collaboration with committed partners especially the Federal Government so as to expand other means of transportation within and outside the state.

He then commended the development partners for making the project a reality, while urging the ministry of transport to make good use of the investment and adhere to the

(MoU).

Other speakers including the commissioner for Transport, Hajiya Ramatu Mohammed Yar'adua, who expressed optimism that the newly purchased buses will revamp the sector, said the thirty-eight buses supplied comprise of 24 units of 16 seater buses, Nine units of 30 seater buses, four units of 55 seater buses and one utility Hyundai, while the rest 24 will be delivered soon.



THE STATES AT A GLANCE | Osun

Apero: Oyetola's people's assembly takes off in Osun

Since the inception of his administration, the Governor of the State of Osun, Mr Adegboyega Oyetola, has consistently sought to incorporate public interest into the government's agenda. Several actions

and interventions that have ensued within the first year of his administration were conceptualised from the yearnings and aspirations made by the people of Osun during his "Thank You Tour".

He had embarked on a "Thank You Tour," shortly after he became governor.

As a follow up to the tour and validation of the conscious mandate to run an all-inclusive participatory

government, Governor Adegboyega Oyetola, through the Ministry of Information and Civic Orientation, organised a discursive assembly and civic engagement rendezvous at Akinorun High School, Ikirun, for the citizens of Ifelodun-Boripe-Odo Otin Federal Constituency.

The programme, tagged "Apero", marked by jubilant crowd and theatrical renditions, was underlined by the need for the government and the people of Osun to rub minds about the journey so far and as well suggest ways forward. It had the objective of presenting the government's stewardship account on one hand, and identifying critical development needs in the State through feedbacks from the people on the other hand.

The privileged access to the Governor and the opportunity to present critical developmental issues saturated the atmosphere on the day as myriad of citizens sought to have an audience with the Governor. The entries were scientifically reviewed using the simple random sampling method to draw the list of people that eventually aired their opinions, intent and petitions. Attended by different civil societies and citizens groups, the maiden edition of Apero, which was held at the Ifelodun-Boripe-Odo-Otin Federal Constituency, featured

passionate discussions about the sundry issues in the State, characterised by both commendations and petitions. The rendezvous was also attended by Monarchs within the Constituency, who registered their impressions in what seemed like the court of public opinion. Representatives of the Nigerian entertainment industry: Laide Bakare, Damola Olatunji and Adewale Elesho, all of Osun origin, were also in attendance.

In her welcome address, the Honorable Commissioner for Information and Civic Orientation, Mrs Funke Egbemode, congratulated the people of Ifelodun, Boripe and Odò-Qtin federal constituency on the opportunity to interact directly with the governor and tell him their needs. She said the Governor is determined to improve the living standards in the state; hence, she counselled citizens to engage the Governor judiciously.

In the accountability wing of the programme, the Commissioner for Health, Dr. Rafiu Isamotu; Special Adviser to the Governor on Public Health, Siji Olamiju; Commissioner for Education, Hon. Folunso Oladoyin; and the Commissioner for Agriculture, Dayo Adewole; made remarks about the achievements and development plans of the administration through their respective ministries.

Gov Oyetola signs Amotekun Bill into Law



Governor Oyetola with Speaker Owoeye while signing the Amotekun bill into law

Governor Adegboyega Oyetola of the State of Osun has signed the State's Security Network Agency and Amotekun Corps Establishment Bill into Law.

The bill was transmitted to the governor by the Speaker of the State Assembly, Hon. Timothy Owoeye.

The House passed the bill into law after a public hearing to seek stakeholders' contributions and suggestions on the bill.

Oyetola, while signing the Bill at the Executive Council Lounge, Government Secretariat, Abere, Osogbo, dis-

closed that the law signifies a declaration of war on criminals in the state and its environs, adding that the State "is prepared to go to any legitimate length to ensure that criminals in the state have no breathing space."

The Governor, who noted that the Law shall complement the Constitution and other laws setting up the various security agencies in guaranteeing the safety and security of the people and their property, expressed confidence that the law would further enhance the profile of Osun as the most

peaceful state and preferred investment destination in the country.

Oyetola clarified that before the idea of Amotekun for the South West was birthed in July, 2019, Osun had already concluded plans to unveil its own Security Taskforce owing to the government's desire to make the State commercial hub of the South West. He, however, said due to Osun's commitment to the regional integration objective of the South-West, the State wasted no time in keying into the Amotekun idea for regional security.



THE STATES AT A GLANCE | Gombe

Gov Inuwa receives report on state tertiary institutions

Governor Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya of Gombe state has received the report of the Professor Buba Bajoga-led committee on tertiary institutions.

Speaking during a brief ceremony held at the Exco Chamber, Governor Yahaya said his administration will study the recommendations at the State

Executive Council level with a view to taking decisions and coming up with an implementation strategy that will be in the best interest of the people of the

state.

The Governor expressed confidence that the calibre of the committee membership, which comprised academics of high repute and seasoned administrators, did a comprehensive job, and that justice will be done to the document.

He assured the people of the State that his administration will continue to accord the education sector the priority it deserves for the overall good of the younger generation.

Governor Yahaya decried that over the years, Gombe state had consistently remained at the bottom of the ladder in academic performance, especially in national examinations, saying his administration is already taking measures to reverse the ugly trend by improving the quality of education from the basic

level which he noted will ultimately dovetail to tertiary level and have effect on the state's rating.

"I believe once proper and sound basic education is attained, certainly there will be optimal performance and our students will have the ability to meet admission requirements to actualize their dreams of studying at institutions of higher learning".

Speaking earlier, the Chairman of the Committee, Professor Buba Bajoga said the observations and recommendations contained in the report were made after the committee had visited all the campuses of the 5 institutions to assess their level of establishment, preparedness and ability to operate in accordance with their enabling laws.

According to Professor Bajoga, the committee also examined the academic facilities, including the infrastructure, number and ranks of academic and non-academic staff, academic support facilities such as workshops, libraries, laboratories, lecture theatres among others.

The committee members expressed appreciation to the Governor for the opportunity to serve.



Gombe State Governor, Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya of Gombe state has received the report of the Professor Buba Bajoga led committee on tertiary institutions

Int'l Women's Day: Women are agents of nation building, says Yahaya

Gombe State Governor, Alhaji Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya has assured women in the state of his administration's commitment to ensuring the promotion of policies and programmes that will address their needs and challenges.

In a goodwill message

to mark the 2020 International Women's Day, Governor Yahaya said that the occasion was not just a day to celebrate women, but to also reflect on the challenges they face and implement workable solutions towards addressing them and removing barriers that impede their success.

He commended the theme of this year's celebration, #EachForEqual, which seeks to draw attention to the idea that gender inequality is not only a women's issue, but economic and community one.

He said: "In Gombe state, women hold key

cabinet positions which is one of the steps towards demonstrating that indeed, my administration subscribes to gender mainstreaming and provides ease of access to resources and opportunities, including economic participation and decision-making regardless of gender".



HOW GOV YAHAYA IS TACKLING EDUCATION CHALLENGES IN GOMBE

By Ismaila Uba Misilli

When Governor Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya assumed the mantle of leadership in Gombe State, he knew there would be challenges but the nature and degree of crises in all sectors of governance were however hidden with the cosmetics of politics and propaganda by the immediate past administration.

It is no longer news that Gombe State had one of the highest rates of educational exclusion in Nigeria despite being a state with great potentials that could be leveraged to drive development in all sectors but was having a fearful statistics of over half a million out-of-school children, representing nearly 6 per cent of the 10.3 million out-of-school in Nigeria.

No one could really understand how a state like Gombe that is not amongst the top 20 most populous states would have such huge statistics which troubled the minds of every well-meaning citizen of the state including Governor Inuwa Yahaya whom, upon assumption into office swung into action by hurriedly declaring a state of emergency in the sector to quickly reverse the trend before things could fall further apart.

When you listen to the speech of Governor Inuwa Yahaya whenever he speaks about the education sector in the state, you will feel his pains that over half a million in a state of roughly 3.2 million people were out-of-school.

In one of his speeches, he said ``If we don't put our chil-



dren in school and we continue to say children are the leaders of tomorrow, then what kind of leaders are we going to give to the future? If it takes emergency approach to bring them back to school, then know that we MUST get them back to school by all means possible". If this is not what leadership with compassion entails, then I wonder how else to reflect leadership.

Education is the light of any society which most, if not all developed countries have leveraged to improve the living standard of its citizens as well as empowering communities and eradicating poverty. With education, every child can reach the acme of self fulfilment and as it is now, Governor Inuwa Yahaya has shown that robust commitment to make the dream of every Gombe child, irrespective of religion or ethnic affiliation get their basic right because under this administration, education has become the right of every child.

The power to refine whatever skill and ability that a child has rests on education; it is one tool that is capable of revolutionizing the social status of any child and it has made the lives of many children from poor background better than those of their parents as it is also the wish of every parent and Gov. Inuwa too, to have Gombe kids do beyond their parents' achievements in life.

Juxtaposing the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, UNESCO's Education for All (EFA) report released for 2000-2015 proposing that 15 per cent to 20 per cent of annual budgets be earmarked for education and with the approved 2020 budget of education sector which is pegged at N22billion out of the N130.8billion, representing about 17 per cent of the total budget, one needs no soothsayer to tell that the future of our children is safe again and that in Gombe State, Governor Inuwa Yahaya is working in tandem with the best global standards as far as the educa-



...TACKLING EDUCATION CHALLENGES IN GOMBE

tion sector is concerned. Little wonder the Governor was honoured with the title *Wakilin Ilimin Nafada* by the Emir of Nafada for his remarkable commitment and determination towards revamping the education sector in the state.

In a bid to remedy the situation, Governor Inuwa Yahaya approved the release of money for the payment of counterpart funds for Universal Basic Education (UBEC) that facilitated the securing of about N1.5bn Basic Education Grant and ensured compliance with the UBEC partnership guidelines.

In furtherance of Governor Inuwa's quest to see to it that children were mopped out of streets to school to address the over 550,000 estimated out-of-school children, Governor Inuwa Yahaya's noble administration also flagged-off the Better Education Service Delivery for All (BESDA) which will spend \$6,000,000.00 (Six Million US dollars) tackle the menace, secure assistance through donations of a science laboratory complex which consists of three labs for physics, chemistry and biology with capacity for thirty (30) students.

As it is said that when one invests genuinely, the gains of such investment is first seen by others, such have become the testimonies of the education sector in Gombe as the people and other stakeholders are beginning to see results.

Today, as a result of BESDA's intervention, there are now over 791 learning centres with 75,491 students with other interventions that are yet to be added to this statistics; it is an indication that we now can heave a sigh of relief while hoping that the current platforms continue to yield more positives in Gov. Inuwa's quest towards finding answers to the near decade-long questions in the education sector.

Today, out of the estimated 550, 000 out-of-school children Gov. Inuwa has within roughly 7 months returned over 200, 000 of them back to school whilst also strengthening efforts in girl-child education which has also attracted the Government of Norway to partner with Gombe in that regard.

With this feat from a leader that many have described as an education-



al enthusiast, analysts have projected that if in 7 months over 140, 000 children were returned back to school, with consistency, in two years, the menace of street kids in Gombe would have been checked.

For many who have observed with excitements how edifices are now being built as classroom blocks while existing schools are massively being renovated to attract more children to schools and give them the right atmosphere that our pupils and students deserve, it can only get better with Governor Inuwa Yahaya who has not seized to amaze with fresh ideas on renovation and construction. In this regard, the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) has constructed and renovated several schools across the state; indeed, infrastructure is now on the front burner.

As at the last count, the state Government through SUBEB has constructed and rehabilitated more than 400 classrooms across the eleven local government areas, which is an unprecedented achievement.

Governor Inuwa Yahaya is a man in a hurry to deliver on his promises especially in the education sector, knowing full well that it takes time for the tree of education to bear fruits while bearing in mind also the level of damage and unrivalled dilapidation of infrastructure prior to the coming of his administration.

The Governor's trail-blazing approach to the issue of quality education is another aspect of the education sector in Gombe that had won the admiration of many.

Governor Inuwa Yahaya's high-taste preference for quality has seen him embarking on capacity building for teachers in the state. Worthy of note also is the introduction of mock, preps in all secondary schools across the state to give students undivided attention and close-marking preparation to improve their performance to change the ugly narratives in external examinations.

This is poised towards answering the monstrous questions with regards to the poor quality of education in the state. It can be recalled that the Transition Committee constituted by Governor Yahaya before taking over the mantle of leadership had submitted that over 60 per cent of primary school teachers were not qualified for the classrooms and that also is being answered through the conversion of the hither-to abandoned and dilapidated Almajiri school complex in Kwami to a modern Teachers Training Centre (TTC) with a training capacity to cater for over 500 teachers per training session with state of the art facilities and accommodation which is expected to be commissioned soon.

Today, whenever you go to any classroom in Gombe, only quality and competent teachers now man classrooms. In addition to that, teachers audit is being conducted in schools across the state to ascertain those that have professional qualifications and those without. This will be followed by competency test that will help to grade teachers for various training categorisation and demand. The competency test is to particularly assist teachers to build their capacity and helping them meet up with the required standard for teachers anywhere in the world.

The very fabrics of Governor Inuwa Yahaya's several reforms in the education sector are embedded in Brad Henry's quote (A one-time Governor of Oklahoma, USA) that "No other investment yields as great a return as the investment in education. An educated workforce is the foundation of every community and the future of every economy."

With these efforts towards revamping the sector, there is no doubt that we have in Governor Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya, a good investor who is concerned about the foundation of every community in Gombe as well as the future of the economy of the state.

– Ismaila Uba Misilli is the Senior Special Assistant (Media and Publicity) to Gombe state Governor.



HOW GOV SULE'S 'NEDS' IS ATTRACTING INVESTMENTS INTO NASARAWA

By Lamar Yusuf

On May 29th 2019 when Engineer Abdullahi Sule ascended the saddle as Governor of Nasarawa State, he declared that his singular objective and mission is to propel Nasarawa State to become “one of the top three most competitive states in Nigeria by 2023, which is why he conceived a new, and futuristic document called the Nasarawa Economic Development Strategy (NEDS) which he said will be his administration’s blueprint to build enduring systems, attract investments and business models that will tackle the root causes of poverty in the state.

Thereafter Engineer Abdullahi A. Sule sought 15 through-bred global economic players and conscripted them into a think-tank called Nasarawa State Economic and Investment Advisory Council, under the chairmanship of Professor Konyisola Ajayi (SAN) which he tasked with the mission to bring to bear their wealth of experience and ginger the implementation of Nasarawa Economic Development Strategy (NEDS) as a pathway to unlock all constraints which may have hitherto hindered the inflow of investments into Nasarawa State in the past.

On 27th September 2019, Governor Sule held an exploratory discussion with the Deputy Secretary of the United Nations, Hajija Amina Mohammed in New York, where he presented the NEDS document, to which, the UN Deputy Secretary General commended the governor noting that, Engineer Abdullahi A. Sule has exhibited futuristic vision, as well as a modern approach to governance which is in sync with the global clarion call for governments especially in Africa to promote a start-up culture among young Africans.

In tandem with the conviction of Hajija Amina Mohammed that NEDS document is intelligent and timely, and will lead to rapid economic transformation in Nasarawa State, citizens have begun to see quick evidences of the rising industrial profile of Nasarawa State under ten months of the stewardship of Engineer Abdullahi A. Sule.

On Friday 29th November 2019, the Group Managing Director of Flour Mills Nigeria Mr. Paul Gbededo acknowledged in Lagos that without doubt, “Nasarawa State means Business”, and that Governor Abdullahi A. Sule was proactive and investor focused.

Mr. Gbededo lauded the unique NEDS document evolved by Engineer



Abdullahi A. Sule describing it as compelling and speaks to depth, hard-work and a brilliant acumen to attract investment at par with global standards. He noted that NEDS reaffirmed with clarity that Nasarawa State provides the most suitable fertile land and geographic advantage in terms of access to markets for Flour Mills Nigeria, particularly in the aspect of large scale Cassava farming, citing that the absence of improved cassava variety in Nigeria offers Flour Mills a lucrative gap to take advantage of the prime location, high level of political will and the prevailing ease of business being provided by Nasarawa State under Engineer Sule, as well as the world class digital land administration system of NAGIS: Nasarawa Geographic information Service, to invest in Nasarawa State.

At the end of the meeting, it was resolved that Flour Mills Nigeria will invest in Agri-processing in Nasarawa State with investments in Cassava farming and Sugar plantation. And in a bid to quickly seal the

deals with Dangote and Flour Mills, Governor, Engineer Abdullahi Sule subsequently moved officials of the Ministry for Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, as well as that of the Ministry of Lands, to Lagos, in order to facilitate the final signing of agreements with the Dangote Group and Flour Mills of Nigeria PLC.

According to the Governor, it became necessary to move the government officials to Lagos in order for the parties to sign agreements that will see the Dangote Group acquiring 50, 000 hectares of land to set up rice plants in Doma and Nasarawa local government areas, while the Flour Mills of Nigeria Plc. will also acquire 10, 000 hectares to set up cassava processing plant in Toto Local Government Area of Nasarawa State. In his words; “Nasarawa State cannot wait for investors. We shall come to Investors in Lagos and everywhere else. That is why I am taking the Ministry of Local Government and Ministry of Lands to Lagos. We are following Dangote and Flour Mills so we can sign their agreements, wrap the deal and move on!”

On the occasion of the National Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Clinic for Viable Enterprises and Exhibition which held on Monday 9TH February 2020, Governor Abdullahi A. Sule restated that: “It is instructive to state that Nasarawa State has keyed into the Federal Government initiative of Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP). It is for this reason that, we developed the Nasarawa Economic Development Strategy (NEDS) and we have continued to initiate policies and



HOW GOV SULE'S 'NEDS' IS ATTRACTING INVESTMENTS INTO NASARAWA

programmes, geared towards the creation of conducive business environment for business to thrive, poverty reduction, as well as job creation in Nasarawa State.”

On the basis of NEDS, the Engineer Sule led administration has continued to initiate policies and programmes geared towards the creation of conducive business environment for business to thrive, poverty reduction, as well as job creation in Nasarawa State.

Governor Sule also commenced the conceptualization of an industrial cluster within the Abuja-Nasarawa corridors for small industries to thrive on the basis of digital land administration, easy access, and government support as well as tax holidays.

The vision of Governor Sule is predicated on developing Karu axis from Mararaba to Masaka, to become an industrial hub akin to Ogun State, which is on the fringe of Lagos State; or reminiscent of the relationship between Maryland and Washington DC in the United States of America.

This is what has led the governor to constitute a 13-member Nasarawa State Enabling Business Environment Council (NEBEC) in line with the Federal Government framework to drive reforms on ease of doing business. This NEBEC will be chaired by the Governor himself and is working in synergy with willing investors towards addressing structural issues in doing business in Nasarawa State, so as to enable seamless start-up businesses and ensure the facilitation of necessary incentives to be provided by government.

As we live today in a world of Information Technology, ICT is also at the soul and the heart of Nasarawa Economic Development Strategy -NEDS, which is the very spine of the new economic order and administration of Engineer Abdullahi A. Sule in Nasarawa State.

Abiding by the policy framework of NEDS, Engineer Sule is gradually creating a flourishing innovation and technology environment in Nasarawa State, where local businesses can remain at the cutting edge of ICT development and indigenous entrepreneurs, investors and local artisans can maintain a highly efficient ICT infrastructure and good business models susceptible to innovation.

It is to create an ICT savvy environment that on assumption of office,

Governor Sule transformed Nasarawa State into technology and innovation destination choice for young techpreneurs by creating Five ICT Innovation Hubs across 5 Local Governments in the state. The Governor also remodeled the existing state E-libraries which are now equipped with over 40 million e-resources, and also got his government to enter into a “business” partnership with JAMB by establishing three Computer Based Test (CBT) centers with 2250 Computers and capacity to conduct computer based examinations for 6750 candidate on a daily basis. As this JAMB-CBT centers have begun to generate minimal revenue, the administration of Engineer Sule has also deployed E-health at the Nasarawa State

Tertiary Health Care Institution, Dalhatu Araf Specialist Hospital (DASH); which presently operates via the Electronic Records Management System (ERMS), so as to capture, organize, maintain and retrieve patient's medical records with ease and generate revenue at the same time.

With the investor focused leadership of Engineer Sule, all official roadblocks and local hindrances have been cleared up to pave the way for Dangote Group to commence its works in Tunga, Doma and Nasarawa Local Government areas, just as Azman Farm and Rice Mill have completed all arrangement with government and the local community to cultivate 14, 000 hectares of land for rice production in Toto Local Government Area and Flour Mills who are have also started the establishment of their own cassava and sugar plantations on 20, 000 hectares of land around Umuasha.

Nasarawa State has also been identified as one of the six states selected by the African Development Bank (AfDB), for the

establishment of agro processing industrial zone. These SAPZs are designed to concentrate agro-processing activities within areas of high agricultural potential like Nasarawa State in order to increase productivity and competitiveness.

The African Development Bank (AfDB), has identified 14 sites across the six geopolitical regions of Nigeria to be called THE SPECIAL AGRO INDUSTRIAL PROCESSING ZONES (SAPZs) and has already earmarked \$500m loan for the development of these agro-industrial zones which will be similar to the FREE TRADE ZONES.

Nasarawa State was selected in the North Central Region, evidently because Engineer Abdullahi A. Sule is steadily working to reposition Nasarawa State to take full advantage of the massive opportunities in Agriculture which abound in the state, as he adapts his NEDS (Nasarawa Economic Development Strategy) to create non-oil sector jobs and raise IGR, generate employment through new industries and ignite entrepreneurship opportunities, so that thousands of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) will flourish in rural communities.

– Lamar Yusuf is the Chief Press to Nasarawa State Governor, Abdullahi Sule



AS WE LIVE TODAY IN A WORLD OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY, ICT IS ALSO AT THE SOUL AND THE HEART OF NASARAWA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY -NEDS, WHICH IS THE VERY SPINE OF THE NEW ECONOMIC ORDER AND ADMINISTRATION



THE NUTRITION SCORECARD...

act as a motivation and also provide an enabling environment which would lead to an improvement in the nutritional state of the nation.

She highlighted the criteria used in selecting the outcomes under the following conditions

- Does it draw attention to the primary audience which are the Governors?
- Can they be considered for high level accountability and Advocacy purposes?
- Are they aligned with the commitments?
- Are the data available at the state level?
- Can the data be regularly updated each year?

The second speaker spoke on the proposed indicators which would be used in the scorecard. These includes:

- Children under 5 weighing below bottom line
- Children (0-6 months) exclusive breastfeeding
- Children (6-11, 12-59) months given vitamin A

Questions and Comments Arising from the Outcome Indicators

1) Alhaji Abdulhad Abdulkabir, SNO, SPHCA suggested that the number of children with Severe Acute Malnutrition be included as part of the outcome indicators.

2) Dr Adeyinka Onabolu Senior Advisor, Food Security and Nutrition, FMARD suggested that the minimum dietary diversity for children can be used to measure the quality of Complementary feeding.

3) Mrs Eriken Uzoamaka SNO, ASPHCDA suggested the inclusion of other indicators not captured by the DHIS2 to the outcome indicators.

4) Dr Chizoba Steve-Ederube, Nutrition Specialist, UNICEF asked if the minimal meal frequency can be added to the outcome indicators and also suggested that the number of children that receives the micronutrient powders (MNPs) be included as part of the outcome indicators. She also talked about including the number of children that receives deworming tablets in the outcome indicators.

5) Dr Karina, Head of Nutrition, Save the Children, raised concerns about data quality and suggested that screenings during the maternal and child health week can be used to provide other data aside from that of the DHIS2.

6) Dr Adeyinka Onabolu Senior Advisor, Food Security and Nutrition, FMARD emphasized on the importance of the DHIS data and that we can help create our own routine data collection methods because other sectors cannot continue to use nutrition specific/sensitive data to make decisions regarding nutrition.

7) Dr Ahmad, Senior Health Advisor, NGF suggested that each ministry should create its own information department and suggested that different sectors should reach out to people that can help them create a good information system and make the data available. He also said



SCORECARD VISUALIZATION STRATEGY GROUP ONE

By Mr Muchiri Nyaggah, Consultant, DataDENT

that a point is coming where there will be a need to triangulate the survey data and routine data.

Dr Adeyinka Onabolu Senior Advisor, Food Security and Nutrition, FMARD mentioned that the narrative should not only dwell on SAM and deworming alone as that will not move nutrition forward but suggested that emphasis be placed on other preventive sectors such as Agriculture and Education in order to prevent the occurrence of these menaces.

Muchiri Nyaggah began by explaining the need for prioritizing, using a car dashboard as an illustration. Speaking on how best to present the scorecard to the governors at the NGF meetings and also stating the importance of visualization of data as it provides important information for decision making. He also emphasized the importance of the scorecard as a data visualization tool



THE NUTRITION SCORECARD...

in Nigeria.

Key features of the proposed options for the scorecard are:

- Colour-coding which indicates what a State has achieved per commitment.
- Progress Circles which are colour coded, based on the number of points earned which gradually increases as a State's score increases.
- Directionality arrows which indicate upward or downward progress per commitment.
- The Step Completed Column which indicates the percentage of indicators a State has achieved out of the total number of indicators across the commitment.

Highlighting the four various options, we have,

- Option 1: All indicators packaged as a composite with programs shown using traffic light colour coding
- Option 2: Each achieved indicator shown as a circle, with traffic light colour coding.
- Option 3: State are red until they achieve all indicators per commitment (i.e. absence of a yellow colour coding)
- Option 4: Display the underlying indicators for each commitment and use red/green colour coding to show

whether the indicator is complete.

In order to get the stakeholder's thoughts and opinions, participants were requested to identify their likes and dislikes about their most preferred choice of visualization.



HOW STATES CAN UTILISE THE SCORECARD EFFECTIVELY

By Dr Ahmad Abdulwahab, Senior Health Advisor, NGF.

Panelists: Permanent secretary Oyo State Ministry of Budget and Planning, DPRS Anambra State Ministry of Budget and Planning and Permanent Secretary Katsina State Ministry of Budget and Planning.

Question 1: What are your views about the Nutrition Scorecard?

P.S, Oyo State MoBP emphasized the importance of governors being kept informed of the happenings in the State, believing that at a glance, the governors will know the nutritional status and general health situation in the State, using this scorecard.

Question 2: How do you think the Nutrition Scorecard can be used for advocacy in the state?

P.S, Katsina State MoBP responded by stating his concern about the scorecard being a final output to be presented to the governor and that every output requires an input and hopes that the instrument used to measure the indicators adequately represent and reflect the exact situation at the state level. He believed that if the right information is presented to the Governors, it would spur action in nutrition.

Question 3: What are the challenges you perceive about the use of the Scorecard for Advocacy?

P.S, Anambra State MoBP responded by saying that the first challenge he envisaged was that the members of the Anambra State Food & Nutrition committee must be educated on scorecards, to ensure that they can also utilise the scorecards in their own advoca-

cy. He emphasized on the need to educate them on it.

The PS Oyo State spoke about the issues in Nutrition such as

- Measurement and Evaluation issues
- The issue of data source; routine or administrative
- Home grown approach to data collection
- Capacity building and strengthening

She emphasized the need for people to understand the issue on ground in order for there to be a common ground for benchmarking across all the states.

QUESTIONS FROM OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

1) Toyin Adewale, Technical Advisor, Alive Thrive asked the permanent secretaries what they think about their own roles in ensuring the efficacy of the scorecard.

2) Dr Ahmad, Senior Health Advisor, NGF asked why it was difficult for the permanent secretaries to chair this meeting?

RESPONSES

1. The PS Katsina responded by stating that:

- The permanent secretary will ensure routine quarterly meetings of the SCFN are held as the chairman of the committee.
- They will ensure proper allocation of funds for interventions and ensure implementation and monitoring and evaluation.

THE STATES AT A GLANCE | Ogun

Gov Abiodun lifts embargo on LG accounts

In order to ensure effective administration of the third tier of government in Ogun State, the Governor, Prince Dapo Abiodun, has lifted the embargo placed on bank accounts of all the 20 Local Government Areas in the state.

The de-freezing of accounts took effect from Monday February 17, 2020.

Governor Abiodun announced this at the Strategic Session for Transition Committee chairmen and members of all the Local Government Areas in the State.

The workshop with the theme, "Towards a New Local Government System in Ogun - Doing Things Differently", was held at the Executive Council Chambers, Governor's Office, Oke-Mosan Abeokuta.

Prince Abiodun who described local government as the closest to the people, said for the people to feel the impact of government, those at the helm of affairs at the council level must embark on masses' oriented projects and be fair in their dealings with them.

He said though they were not elected, the process of their appointment was consensus, as community and party leaders were involved in their selection as a corollary of the inclusive approach to governance in the state.



This, he noted, underscores his call that they must perform excellently to justify the confidence reposed in them.

"The process through which you were appointed was a consensus oriented one. I did not sit down here at Oke-Mosan and appoint anyone. I allowed your leaders and party faithful sit down in your various local government Councils and present to us those they consider best for them and the people.

"I am proud that the process was successful and that is why following your appointment, there was hardly, if any, complaints or rancour across the length and breadth of this State. From all intents and purposes, you are truly the representatives of the people of your various local governments and we will accord you that respect", he noted.

The Governor who explained the mantra of his government to the local

government administrators, said the vision was to provide qualitative leadership that would create a conducive environment for public private partnership which was considered fundamental for economic growth and individual prosperity of the people. He urged them to key into this vision and replicate same in their various localities.

Governor Abiodun called on them to take advantage of the geographical location of the State by attracting investments to their local governments, however, charged them to be Inclusive and refrain from taking arbitrary decisions, but that which reflects the collective will and desires of the people.

"You are closest to the grassroots. Be focused and provide qualitative leadership. When you take decisions, consult your people. Take decisions that reflect the collective will and desires of your people and do not impose taxes and rates that are not known to our laws. It's extortion and I won't encourage that", he advised.

On security, the Governor enjoined them as the Chief Security Officers of their Local Governments, to ensure adequate security, as they would not achieve any meaningful development without security.

"No investor would in-

vest in crime prone areas", Abiodun added.

He said his administration in the last seven months, had carried out lots of reforms, which include, setting up of the State Investment Promotion Agency (OGUN-INVEST), and the State Public Private Partnership Office, aimed at attracting investors and improving ease of doing business in the State.

In the area of infrastructure, he said 38 roads had been rehabilitated across the State, with two newly constructed ones ready for commissioning.

He further disclosed that contract for the construction of the Ijebu-Ode-Epe Road which would be completed in twelve months time had also been awarded.

Whilst urging the new LG administrators to replicate the programmes of the State in their respective areas, he informed that 5,000 units of houses would be built for low income and middle-income earners at affordable cost in Abeokuta, Ilaro, Ijebu-Ode and Sagamu.

He charged them to brace up for the challenges ahead as his administration continues to make strides in agriculture, education, health, human capital development, youth and empowerment generation as well as digitalization, among others.



Fayemi leads 40-man Task Force on COVID-19

In a bid to checkmate the possible spread of the Coronavirus pandemic, Ekiti State Governor, Dr Kayode Fayemi recently inaugurated a 40-man Task Force to coordinate the prevention and management of the dreaded disease in the State, with a charge to "beat the virus" and minimize its impact on the state economy.

Dr Fayemi, who heads the Task Force comprising heads of all tertiary health institutions in the state, epidemiologists, state officials and representatives of the informal sector, said his administration was determined to prevent the outbreak of the coronavirus in the state through a combination of public enlightenment and updated medical facilities.

The State Commissioner for Health and Human Services, Dr Mojisola Yaya-Kolade, Commissioners for Environment, Gbenga Agbeyo; Head, Office of Transformation and Service Delivery (OTSD), Prof Bolaji Aluko; state representatives of the World Health Organisation (WHO) and UNICEF are also members of the task force.

The Governor, who addressed stakeholders and journalists at a special session on COVID-19 in Ado-Ekiti, also disclosed other arrangements being put in place to properly manage the health issue.

These include, two ambulances (fitted with state-of-the-art equipment), volumes of pamphlets and posters; an isolation centre for quarantine, 24/7 emergency response unit; gears for health officers and hand sanitizers as well as water dispensing units for use in schools, offices and public institutions.

Fayemi said: "I have set up a 40-person Ekiti State Task Force on Covid-19 under my direct leadership with rep-

resentatives from all relevant sectors of the State including medical experts, state government officials, the legislature, local government chairmen, religious leaders and traditional leaders, sector leaders like the NURTW, market associations, Civil Society Organizations and Development Partners.

"We will leave no stone unturned to ensure that Ekiti people are prepared to beat the virus and minimize its impact on our economy," Fayemi assured.

The Governor, who took time to enlighten the gathering on the symptoms of the virus, urged the people to inculcate, improve and sustain a healthy lifestyle, noting that "coronavirus was an offshoot of unhygienic lifestyle and spread vastly by unhealthy living.

Governor Fayemi also directed public and private institutions in the state to provide hand sanitizers and water and soap for proper

washing of hands to minimize the risk of an outbreak in the state. A school and market outreach where people would be enlightened would follow, according to the Governor.

COVID: Guidance for Schools in Nigeria

Summary

The first COVID-19 case in Nigeria was confirmed on 27th February, 2020 in Lagos.

COVID-19 is caused by a virus that spreads through droplets released when an infected person coughs or sneezes. A person can become infected with this new coronavirus by being in close contact (within 2 metres) with a person infected with COVID-19. Infection can also spread by touching a surface that an infected person coughed or sneezed on.

Skilled public health teams, led by the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control, are monitoring the situation daily.

The most important advice is for all schools to encourage their students to maintain good hand and respiratory hygiene to remain safe.

School proprietors, headmasters, and head mistresses must ensure that students have access to clean water and soap at all times while on the school premises.

The best way for schools to avoid COVID-19 infection is to:

- Ensure students and teachers wash their hands frequently
- Show students how to cough or sneeze into a tissue, or to cough into their elbow if they cannot get tissue
- Clean and disinfect their premises often
- Encourage sick students and teachers to stay home

As of today (05/03/20), it is **not necessary** to close schools or to cancel large gatherings.

Symptoms of COVID-19 are cough, shortness of breath, difficulty in breathing, fever, and muscle pain within 14 days of exposure to someone infected with the virus or returning from a country with ongoing community transmission*.

If anyone has been in contact with a suspected case in a school, they should contact NCDC on **0800 9700 0010**. While laboratory test results for COVID-19 are awaited, there is no need to close the facility or send students or staff home.

You can find the latest information and advice by contacting NCDC on:

- NCDC Toll-free Number: 080097000010
- SMS: 08099555577
- WhatsApp: 07087110839
- Website for additional resources: www.ncdc.gov.ng
- Twitter and Facebook: @NCDCgov

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*Countries with ongoing community transmission of COVID-19 as of 01/03/20 are China, Iran, Japan, South Korea, and Italy



BEYOND BEGGING

By Elizabeth Vera Cruz and Endurance Igbru



THE BELIEF SOMEHOW THAT KNOWLEDGE IS MOSTLY ACQUIRED BY CHILDREN WHEN THEY ARE FAR FROM HOME, LANDS CHILDREN WITH AN ISLAMIC TEACHERS WHO IN MOST CASES IS UNABLE TO SHOULDER ANY RESPONSIBILITIES BECAUSE THEY MAINLY FEED ON GIFTS FROM THE PEOPLE

Street begging, to many, may have seemed like a storm in a teacup, in the past but it is beginning to get adequate attention all over the country. Public Transportation, another area that attracts a huge number of youths at the subnational level comes a very close second. In-between is a silent idle population that melts into both. The fallouts from these social cadres, that carry grave consequences for our country, are uncountable.

In the last couple of months, however, several states have taken steps to curb them. Kano and Kaduna States have either banned street begging or criminalised parents whose wards litter the out-of-school children population. There are also seven states where riding commercial transportation popularly called Okada, is outlawed, at least in specific areas or locations. In Lagos Keke-NAPEP is restricted to certain Local Government Areas. It says it is enforcing the Highway Code.

Chairman of the Nigeria Governors' Forum and Governor of Ekiti State, Dr John Kayode Fayemi while receiving the Czech Republic's ambassador to Nigeria, Solil, identified the country's out of school children population as one area where the sub-nationals need help and last week while on a visit to seek help from the Ministry of Humanitarian and Social Services, Gov A A Sule said up to 800000 are destitute in Nasarawa State.

There are poor, penniless and needy people all over Nigeria but a common feature in many large cities is the presence of homeless children and youth; the situation has even derived value that Street Children are becoming a menace to the economy.

Many of these homeless children are Nigerians too. But they have drifted and made the streets their homes. In most cities of Nigeria one of the most striking sight is that of young children, mostly in shabby and dirty clothes with a plastic or aluminium bowls either under the arm or casually held.

The belief somehow that knowledge is mostly acquired by children when they are far from home, lands children with an Islamic Teacher who in most cases is unable to shoulder any responsibilities because they mainly feed on gifts. This exposes children to cater for their daily needs through begging in the neighbourhood or in far-away places.

There are insinuations that most of the people in that bracket slide into crime. There are networks everywhere. And, because many feel they are denied their right to receive education that will equip them to achieve a better life, they would rather drift.

Now states are taking more drastic measures against street begging. But people are asking, what are the alternatives that the states are providing or making available to these people that are daily being hounded?

An NGF research conducted by Elizabeth Vera Cruz and Endurance Igbru prescribes a number of solutions to the question. To address the problem of street begging, the following, they say, can be of help;

1. Policy planners must adopt several approaches if they are to have any impact on the lives of street beggars in all categories. Specific policies and other legislative agendas are needed in terms of age, sex, disability, and family related issues to successfully address the issue of begging.

BEYOND BEGGING

2. More efforts should be placed on changing community attitudes towards children with disabilities in order to enable them to face their future as independent individuals.

3. Stakeholders should create opportunities for street beggars to live by other means.

4. Rehabilitation centers should be properly maintained with basic needs such as water and electricity being provided for the comfort of inmates. Provide feeding for students, in the hope that hunger does not return them to the streets.

6. The Diverted Giving Scheme should be introduced in conjunction with social welfare agencies allocating funds for the underprivileged or less advantaged.

7. A good number of street beggars seem to have some disability or medical condition. Universal health care that guarantees that everyone has access to at least basic health services, will reduce street begging.

8. There should be some form of allowance for poor people with disabilities.

9. There is need for compulsory, free, basic education, for all that are within the school age bracket.

10. Shelter for the homeless should be made available. Food banks for the less privileged should also be provided. How other countries are tackling street begging.

The two researchers also looked at how other places are handling the problem. Elsewhere, more moderate measures are being attempted. Belfast is the latest city to

consider introducing begging-free zones, while New Zealand's capital Wellington has opted to "tolerate begging as part of the cityscape", and is exploring options that include education for beggars on street etiquette, giving vouchers instead of money, and requiring beggars to have permits.

In the US, pressure on lawmakers to rid city centres of begging, or "panhandling", often comes from their "business improvement districts". New York mayor Bill de Blasio signed a bill to restrict "pushy" panhandling in Times Square to designated "activity zones". Oklahoma City has extended its exclusion zones so that panhandling is now prohibited within 50 feet of cafes, restaurants, school bus stops, elementary schools, ATMs and public restrooms.

In the cities of West Palm Beach and San Rafael, city-centre metres accept credit cards and cash donations as an alternative to giving to people who beg on their streets, while in the UK, councillors in Newcastle upon Tyne recently suggested a giant city-centre collection box in the shape of a Greggs pasty (a local fast-food) to encourage people to donate money to local charities.

Other progressive cities are seeking more sustainable solutions, attempting to address the underlying causes and injustices that force many to beg. In Albuquerque,

New Mexico, for example, unpaid work is offered to people who beg. Under Mayor Richard Berry's There's

a Better Way programme, a van is dispatched around the city daily to pick up panhandlers who are interested in working, paying them \$9 an hour to pick litter or weed flowerbeds. At the end of their shift, people are offered overnight shelter.

However, the most people-friendly solution to the ban on begging and Keke NAPEP would be the Scandinavian model. Being welfare countries, the youth and the aged never went without food and shelter in Scandinavia. For the youths, it is a whole life outside the home. They are fed, housed, educated and fostered. Those who show interest in living with average families were fostered out to homes that can rear them for a token. Ultimately this model ships their wards beyond the confines of begging to a life that is neither homeless nor destitute. Nigeria can borrow a leaf from these modules when dealing with homeless children and the destitute.

When they are rehabilitated and trained, homeless children can be productive and useful to society. They can move into agriculture, which is the quickest way out of poverty for the uneducated. Others can be inducted into other economic sectors as the NGF chairman announced that governors are now poised to provide economic opportunities for the under-privileged. There are no better opportunities that drive life beyond begging.



OTHER PROGRESSIVE CITIES ARE SEEKING MORE SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS, ATTEMPTING TO ADDRESS THE UNDERLYING CAUSES AND INJUSTICES THAT FORCE MANY TO BEG



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